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are kept by one or two men in most villages and housed in elaborate pigeon houses built with considerable trouble and protected with magic rites. But they are hardly ever eaten because 'People want to keep many pigeons, so they are afraid to waste the seed' (i.e. to reduce the stock). They like to see the birds flying about the village. They are things kept as a sign of rank. They just flutter and flutter about. They show the rank of the owner of the pigeon house.'[1] A common saying is 'The domestic animals of rich people cause admiration like pigeons'[2] i.e. they wander here and there and give the effect of countless numbers.

Goats and sheep also add to the reputation of their owner. The reluctance of the Bemba to kill and use them for ordinary purposes seems to be based on two different attitudes. On the one hand these people are as ignorant of methods of rearing stock as they are of poultry breeding. They lack completely any pastoral tradition, and the way in which goats, for instance, are treated, makes it little short of miraculous that any survive. The Bemba children do not herd them or look after them, and it is not uncommon for the owner to forget to let his goats out of their pen to feed. A man buys a goat or sheep as a sort of gesture, probably because he wants to acquire possessions, and he puts it in a shed, but he never seems to have any idea of building up a herd or relying economically on the sale of meat. The milk is never used. Added to this the killing of so large an animal as a goat or a sheep has a particular significance for the native, and this makes him unwilling to slaughter except for some special ceremonial reason. A goat is something approaching a human being, and is used nowadays as a substitute for human sacrifices. It can also serve as a compensation for some serious bodily injury, in which case it will probably change hands but not be killed. It is interesting that the Bemba, who have substituted money payments for many of their old religious dues, feel that a financial compensation would be unsuitable in such a case. 'It is right to give a goat because it is a man who has been hurt.' There is even some indication that the Bemba believe that to kill a domestic animal might bring dangerous consequences, just as the murder of a man would. In this tribe the belief that the spirit of a murdered man returns as a haunting

[1] *Fitekwa fya bukankala. Fyakupukapuka: filelanga bukankala bwa kwa cibinda ca nkunda.*

[2] *Fitekwa fya bakankala fyakukumukapo fye nge nkunde.*

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be brought or sent back from the mines, but it is difficult to reckon how much.[1] From superficial observations it seemed that most natives returning from the mines brought clothes and other European goods with them, not money, and that the circulation of cash from this source had very much decreased since the cessation of recruiting with its associated system of deferred pay in 1931. Grain is bought by the Government and mission schools in the area, and a few objects like baskets or mats are sold by craftsmen, but the total sources of money revenue are still exceedingly limited, and anything like a persistent accumulation of money does not exist, and could not exist whatever the people's economic ambitions.

Conceptions of Wealth.

If, then, in the old days a man's material possessions were no measure of his wealth, on what did his economic privileges or status in society depend, and what were the chief ambitions he pursued? Roughly speaking, the aim of every Bemba was to secure rights over the service of others, whether slaves, relatives, fellow villagers, or subjects. This would enable him to make slightly larger gardens than his fellows, or in the case of a chief, to form a band of retainers and counsellors and an army. With the economic privileges he gained through their labour were correlated political position and status. In fact the latter were considered the more important assets. The employer, if he may so be called, gained not only labour for his garden, and warriors for his army, but the prestige of a large following. 'How did you recognize a man of rank or wealth [*umukankala*] in the old days?' I once asked an old courtier of Citimukulu. 'By his clothes?' 'No! not by his clothes. He only got cloth if the chief gave it to him from time to time. Otherwise he wore bark-cloth like every one else. You would know him by his little band of followers [*kalibumba kakwe*], his kinsmen, or the slaves he had.' And this is a statement that can be made with equal truth of a chief to-day, of a European, or indeed any one in authority. 'He came with a lot of people' is a comment which is always received with respect, and I believe the fact that so many natives employed at the mines pay quite a high proportion of their wages on hiring servants is

[1] The Merle Davis Commission estimates that one-fifth of the total earnings of urban natives returned to the rural areas in N. Rhodesia. *Modern Industry and the African*, 1933, p. 184.

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a reflection of this desire to build up a following.[1] 'Why do you pay 5*s.* a month to three boys to work for you when you only earn 60*s.* yourself?' I once asked a mine clerk. He answered simply: 'Because I am a clerk. I am not an ordinary man.'

Bemba ambitions are shaped accordingly. In the old days a young man could only hope to rise by attaching himself by marriage to an *umukankala*, by joining the village of a rich relative, a grandfather, a maternal uncle, or more certainly still by currying favour with a chief. This latter he could do by putting himself under the protection of a kinsman who lived at the capital, and joining the ranks of the *bakalume ba mfumu* (boys or pages of the chief) and doing odd services for the *mfumu*. Thus he obtained food, personal favours, and finally advancement, and possibly a wife. Hence the wide use of charms to secure the goodwill of the *mfumu* and to make oneself appear agreeable to him.[2] This is still true to a large extent to-day.

As distinct from the youth, the aim of a middle-aged man, who had already married and risen in the social scale, was to attract as large a following as possible of his kinsmen, and ultimately to found a village himself. His married daughters and their husbands were more or less bound to live with him in any case, but more distant relatives were only attracted to do so if they liked or respected him or felt it to be to their economic advantage.

Besides this, a prospective headman had to have the support of his chief, whether he desired to form a new village or merely to inherit the position held by one of his kinsmen. Appointment to offices such as headmanships was limited to men of senior age and descent of a lineage group or even a local branch of a clan; but of those eligible, only men who had won the favours of the chief could expect to succeed. To achieve the position of headman a man had to wait in patience, plot, plan, and try to ingratiate himself with the hospitality he offered and to impress his fellows with his *mano* (good sense). This aim holds good to this day, and to this purpose the ambitious man gives himself entirely, some-

[1] The need for firewood fetched at some distance from the compound is of course another factor.

[2] *Umuti wa cisense.* Cf. L. P. Mair's account of the social ambitions of the Ganda: 'To the Muganda the political system of his tribe was not only the machine which dispensed justice and organised the execution of the king's command, but a social ladder which every man of ambition might hope to climb.' *An African People in the Twentieth Century*, 1934, p. 173.

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times testing his power by settling in temporary grass huts (*imitanda*) with his closest relatives to see whether more distant kinsmen will be attracted to live with him, or going about the country assiduously visiting kinsmen. I met an old native of high family on the copper belt who had lived in the urban area ten years saving up money to buy muzzle-loading guns and attracting the nucleus of a small village group by dispensing hospitality at the mines. 'They will go back with me,' he said, 'when they see I am a great man, and that they will have meat at my village.' Once a village has been founded, the headman's efforts cannot be relaxed, for with the Bemba practice of shifting villages, a kinship system which allows of many types of local grouping, and the Government regulations that any man with a following of nine other taxpayers can split off to form a new community, it is naturally difficult for a man to keep together a large enough following. He must still dispense food, avoid dissensions, and use magic. Otherwise at each shifting of the village people may leave him.

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The aim of chiefs, or indeed of any member of the Royal clan, is very similar although their objectives are on a larger scale. The possible heirs of a chief, his brothers, maternal nephews or grandsons, try to win favour with the ruling chief and to prove that they know how to exert authority and govern a village (*ukuteko mushi*), and hence they tend to congregate at the Chief's Court to carry out responsible tasks for him, and in some cases are given headmanships on trial.[1] Once a young *mwinapandu* has attained to a sub-chieftainship he hopes to rise to superior positions. These are chiefly given according to seniority, but, where a man has proved himself unworthy, a different choice would be made. Any holder of the title of chief has, further, to keep men living in his village, and to attract visitors to it. The greatness of the dead Citimukulus is always described by accounts of the immense size of their villages, the number of their courtiers, and the great crowd of visitors and eminent people who sat at their feet all day long. Even to-day capitals are much larger than commoners' villages, and the status of chiefs is still reckoned very largely by the number of huts built round them. A man whose subjects tend to leave his

[1] The present Mukuikile was given a headmanship to one of the Chambesi villages as a young man, but was proved irresponsible and only attained his present position as chief on his return from long years spent as a cook at Livingstone.

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622 554 territory, as well as his village, has a bad reputation, and this often happens at the present day, although formerly a commoner had little power to leave his chief's country.

This desire to attain authority, whether over slaves, kinsmen, villagers, courtiers, or the inhabitants of a district is, therefore, the dominant factor we have to consider. The accumulation of food is entirely secondary to it, and only exists in so far as it permits the necessary concentration of service, as for instance, in the chief's capital. Meat and beer are needed, as we saw, to feed labourers, relatives, and courtiers, and are essential to the working of the tribal machine. To give with a flourish was the glory of chieftainship, as Livingstone found when the Citimukulu of his day (Citapankwa) sent after him the ivory tusk he had sat on because he had touched it.[1] Actual possession of great quantities of foodstuffs does not seem to have been a particularly cherished ambition of the Bemba. They valued a reputation for giving, not for having, and the distribution of food brought by villagers as tribute or levied as toll on the conquered peoples was a measure of wealth. Old men boast to-day about the amount the former chiefs used to take from the Bisa or surrounding peoples, and they respected a man who was able to exact the biggest levy of such tribute. I never heard a chief boast to another about the size of his granaries, but often about the amount of food brought to him and distributed by him.

622 556 In fact chiefs particularly valued the fact that some of their food was brought to them and not grown in their gardens, for it gave them some kind of resource to fall back upon. The Bemba say: 'We will shake the tree until it gives up its fruit', that is to say we will nag the big man until he divides his supplies. If a chief attempted to dry meat and keep it for subsequent division his followers would sit and stare at it and talk about it until he was forced to give them some, but supplies brought irregularly from other villages provided constant fresh resources.[2]

Therefore the chief seems to have aimed at having just sufficient crops to put him in a position of security, but not at increasing

[1] Gouldsbury and Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia*, 1911, p. 17.

[2] An interesting illustration of this fact is that the paramount chief often asked me to keep his quarterly salary from the Government because 'Otherwise my children and grandchildren will keep on coming and will do obeisance and ask for cloths'.

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(*mipashi*) mainly of the matrilineal line, which can be addressed at spirit shrines, the burial places of dead chiefs or in the huts of their individual descendants. They can also be born again with each new child, who acquires a *mupashi* as a guardian spirit, either from his mother's or his father's line, or from the royal dynasty of the territory in which he is born. These guardian spirits can also be inherited, and each dead man or woman is succeeded by a close relative of the same sex who acquires his or her name and guardian spirit.

(ii) *Malignant spirits*, (*fiwa*) who are the spirits of those who died with a feeling of injury because of some violent death, or who left the world with a sense of grievance. *Fiwa* return to strike their descendants with illness or misfortune.

(iii) *Living persons* who can produce good fortune by blessing (*ukupala amate*), which they do chiefly by calling on the ancestral spirits to which they have special right of address; or cursing, which they do through some less specified evil force. The blessings of a chief or a man in authority are particularly potent because of the great spirits such powerful persons have access to. The head of a matrilineage, or an important member of it can also bless in this way. A great social personage who has been injured or not given his due, is feared because he may withhold the blessings of the spirits, or actually pronounce curses (*ukutipa* or *ukulapishya*). The curse is specially important in relation to procreation and childbirth, since the malevolent wishes of the father's sister can produce barrenness in the woman, or impotence in the man. This is described as 'the great curse'. There are, however, a number of curses which can be used by injured people, who 'throw lightning' or are said to be able to 'throw lions', or who can threaten to curse, if their property is stolen, or when specially distressed by the treatment they have received.

(*b*) Impersonal forces include (i) *Magic* in general (*bwanga*), which is the force contained in the leaves, roots or barks of various trees or shrubs and a number of activating agencies (*fishimba*), such as parts of animals or human beings, which can be used by the specialist magician (*yanga*) for beneficent purposes (health, the production of crops, fertility and success) or for harmful purposes (illness, death or crop failure). *Buloshi* is evil magic or

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for which the women in the household are almost entirely responsible. The son-in-law in his turn behaves respectfully towards the elder members of his wife's family. The tensions which I have described as inherent in a matrilocal marriage system of this kind make these presentations very significant in maintaining a family and village structure which, as I have explained, is one of rather precarious balance.

Accepted sex roles. Social structure, as I have used the term here, consists of a series of social roles which are associated with membership of the different social groups of which the tribe is composed, or with different status positions in it or with formalized relationships, such as that of subject to chief. In the present connection the roles which are of special interest are those based on sex and age and the social behaviour expected of husband and wife.

The ideal of a Bemba in the old days was military success and with it the exaction of tribute and slaves from conquered peoples. This is arrogantly expressed in the phrase 'We Bemba cultivate with the spear and not the hoe'. Patient industry in agriculture was not as much admired as the power to command service from others. The ability to attract followers by generosity, the elegant exchange of courtesies, and by personal popularity was highly rated. The organizing powers and judgement which are essential to the achievement of either of these aims are admired in themselves.

Thrift and the slow accumulation of property are not admired since they cannot be achieved in terms of Bemba economy. Children are brought up to share everything they have with the group they are with and easy and even reckless giving is praised. Bemba also admire display of all kinds, but here, as may be imagined, the display is not so much of personal possession but of followers and adherents, who walk about with a man of note and praise him.

Bemba admire ceremonious behaviour in personal relations, exact forms of address, the recognition of social precedence and rights to respect, and the avoidance of quarrels, unpleasantness and 'scenes' which might disturb the delicate balance of village relations. They praise suavity and self-control in personal relations. They delight in circumlocutions and allusive speech, and seem sophisticated in social contacts, as compared with their neighbours, the Bisa.

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881 128 have. Moreover, I have thought it necessary to add to the straightforward description an eye-witness account of the behaviour of the people concerned. How did the people look, dance and speak? Which parts of the ceremony seemed to fill them with fear, excitement, boredom or a feeling of awe? What were the comments made and the views held? This is an addition to detail already wearisomely full, but I believe it adds rather than subtracts from its interest. In spite of the mass of literature on primitive ritual that exists, it is extraordinary how few of the accounts we have give a clear idea of the feeling-tone of the actors engaged. This places a duty on those who have had the fortune to witness a long ceremony to record their impressions of it fully. Without such detail, it is impossible to study the function of a ceremony in a particular culture or of ritual as a whole.

I have endeavoured to lighten the reading by page headings. These should make it possible for the reader to pick out elements of particular interest and to separate the eye-witness account of the ceremony from the interpretation. I have also relegated the chisungu songs to an appendix at the end of the book.

THE ACTORS IN THE CEREMONY

881 *The owner of the ceremony* (*mwine*). Plans for a chisungu ceremony are initiated by the parents of a single girl or by two or three sets of parents whose daughters reach puberty at roughly the same time. These parents provide beer and food for the ceremony with the aid of the parents of the girls' betrothed. The father and mother of the girl engage a mistress of the ceremonies (*nacimbusa*) to organize the rite. In the old days they had to provide bark-cloth for her payment. Nowadays she seems to receive between five and ten shillings as well as an additional present from the bridegroom. This formerly consisted of a bark-cloth but is now more often a blanket or a few shillings.

881 554 The man or woman who provides for a ceremony is known as the owner or *mwine*. The owner is not necessarily a parent. A chief will commonly provide for the chisungu of a young wife betrothed to him before puberty, or for his maternal nieces or sisters. Men of rank will also provide for ceremonies carried out for their sisters,

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daughters or grand-daughters as well as for their own daughters. In fact, it increases the reputation of a man of substance to be able to hold such a ceremony. He is said to 'dance the chisungu' of so-and-so (*ukumucindila icisungu*).

The mistress of the ceremonies (*nacimbusa*).[1] The *nacimbusa* organizes the rites, leads the dances and songs, and arranges for the making of the pottery and other emblems required. She is considered to perform a very important service. It is work that demands a detailed knowledge of ritual, industry in carrying through long and even arduous tasks, organizing ability, tact and personality. A successful *nacimbusa* probably has unusual intellectual ability as well as leadership and the power to attract women from surrounding villages to attend a ceremony and to keep a body of helpers alert and interested for some weeks. The *nacimbusa* is usually an elderly woman who has proved herself to be a successful midwife. The same terms are used for both roles. She is commonly, though not by means always, a member of the royal clan, and there is a tendency for the office to be hereditary. A *nacimbusa* will teach the secrets of the chisungu to her brother's daughter, to whom she owes special obligations, and from whom she can demand service, and she may also teach them to her own daughter. But mere heredity is not enough. A young woman must build up a reputation sufficient to win the confidence of parents so that they will call her in to 'dance their daughters' for them. To do this she must show assiduity in attending local ceremonies and attach herself as a special helper to the *nacimbusa*. She must show capacity and personality, and make a name for herself as a successful midwife. I heard from one old woman that a form of initiation of young *banacimbusa* took place in the old days, and that they were rubbed with medicine and paid an initiation fee, but this account was not substantiated.

The *banacimbusa* are treated with great consideration by other women in the community. In the old days they were allowed to wear a feather head-dress (*ngala*), which was reserved for certain chiefs and hereditary counsellors. They were given respect at a chief's court and have to report the carrying out of each chisungu ceremony to the chief. I am not sure whether this is still done at

[1] The plural prefix for nouns describing persons is 'ba'. Hence *banacimbusa*, or *banacisungu*.

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The Ceremony

881 554 463 793 present, but *banacimbusa* are rather wealthier than their fellows owing to the payments they receive, and they carry themselves with considerable dignity and circumstance.

[608] The *nacimbusa* stands in a special relationship to the girl she has initiated throughout her life. She will probably deliver the girl's first child and act as *mbosua*, or special guardian, to the baby.

881 202 576 *The messenger.* In the old days when the exchange of feasts formed a more important part of the ceremony than they do now, the *nacimbusa* was assisted by a woman known as the *nakalamba*, who was employed to invite the guests to the ceremony by rolling on the ground in front of their houses—the Bemba form of obeisance to a chief. They also fetched clay for the pottery and supervised the ritual cooking of the food.

881 584 *The candidates and their bridegrooms.* The initiation candidate is known as the *nacisungu.* As I have said, these girls were usually betrothed before the ceremony, but it was possible to carry out rites in the case of a girl who was not yet affianced. The bridegroom of a betrothed girl takes part in certain of the ceremonies under the title of *shibwinga*, and this term is also extended to the sister or cross-cousin who may replace him in certain parts of the ceremony.

881 593 604 *The relatives.* Other relatives include the girl's parents and her father's sister. The girl's mother is responsible for providing food and beer, and her father's sister is believed to have a special influence over the fertility of her paternal niece and to stand in a special relationship to her. But the ring of relatives is comparatively small. The uxorilocal family is the chief unit involved.

881 533 *The character of the rite.* The chisungu is a popular ceremony involving much dancing and singing. There is a special drum-beat characteristic of chisungu ceremonies which is frequently used at ordinary beer feasts and always used throughout the rite. Drums are beaten inside the initiation hut, and on the dancing space outside, but they are also carried wherever the women go, some miles out into the bush and back again. The singing is accompanied, as always among the Bemba, by the beat of the drums and by the clapping of hands. Some songs are peculiar to the ceremony and are necessary parts of the rite, but some can be sung at other times. All the chisungu dances are of a characteristic type. They

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tionship.[1] But the girl also assumes a position in an informal group composed of the women of the neighbourhood. The chisungu candidate of one year works the following year for the same *nacimbusa* and joins the ranks of her young helpers. The mistress of the ceremony is often the girl's father's sister, so that the head of this loosely organized cult group is also the senior woman of the patrikin. All *banacimbusa* of a district are arranged in order of age, descent and reputation, although their position is now only recognized in terms of respect and formal salutations. Associated with these women leaders of the society are younger married women of intelligence and personality, who are beginning to practise as midwives, as well as those initiated some years previously. Girls just initiated are under an obligation to help their own *nacimbusa* for one or two subsequent ceremonies, but they need not advance any further up the ladder of fame unless they want to do so. The chisungu gives them entry to the company of the leading women in the neighbourhood and makes it possible for them to rise gradually in the hierarchy of potential *nacimbusa*, although it is not compulsory for them to do so.

Within this loose neighbourhood group the older women are honoured, not as a group of equals, but, in line with Bemba ideals, as a number of persons arranged in an exact order of precedence. This hierarchy of age and fame is constantly expressed in the ceremony. 'The arm-pit is not higher than the shoulder' is the song which the company sings over and over again.[2] The chief *nacimbusa* appears in her plumed head-dress. The *mbusa* are offered again and again in order of rank precedence to the older women present. They are offered kneeling, and rolling on the back as to a chief. Dances are given 'for respect'. In fact more rites express the hierarchy of rank than any other form of symbolic behaviour in the chisungu.

It is perhaps worth noting that a hierarchy of closely related women is a much more common occurrence in a matrilineal tribe

[1] See page 44 which describes the chain of events which begins with the betrothal presents, and continues with the giving of food to the son-in-law, the first puberty rite, the chisungu, the marriage itself, and then the entering-in of the son-in-law some years later.

[2] I.e. the arm-pit was created to be beneath the shoulder, and this order can never be reversed.

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with uxorilocal residence than in a patrilineal one with patrilocal residence. The pivoted relationships of a Bemba village are those based on the woman and not on the man, as we have explained.

The position of the senior women in the chisungu also reflects their activities in everyday life. The *nacimbusa* is the midwife. She attends the childbed of the girls she has 'danced'. She provides the magic which will enable them to come safely through the ordeal. She divines to find out which ancestral spirit is being born. She listens to confessions of adultery, which are often forced, if there is delay or difficulty in the birth of the baby. It depends on her to conceal or tell to the in-laws of any real or supposed bad behaviour of the girl, or any ill-omened birth. Did the girl cry out in her pains? Did she relax her efforts and 'kill' the child by collapsing from the exhausting squatting position, thought necessary during childbirth, to the floor while the child's head was about to appear? Was the baby born feet foremost? All these facts can be revealed or concealed by the *nacimbusa*.

The mistress of the ceremonies often becomes the protector (*mbosua*), or, as we might say, the god-mother of the child. In the old days she gave permission for the resumption of sex relations between husband and wife after the birth and gave advice on the many magic precautions that were needed to protect the young child. She had the right to intervene and correct. Thus the girl child delivered and guarded by the *nacimbusa* was watched by her during her growth to womanhood. She confessed her peccadilloes to the same woman at her chisungu; received admonition in her final congratulation ceremony, and remained in close relation with the *nacimbusa* and her helpers throughout her married life. It is, I think, significant that the mothers sing about giving over their girls to the *nacimbusa*. The mother is tender and indulgent, but the *nacimbusa* corrects. The mother and daughter cannot easily talk of sex matters together, but the grandmother, probably also herself a *nacimbusa*, or some non-related midwife is not limited in this way.

It is because the girl has been 'danced' and is magically changed; because she has been 'taught' and has assumed a position in a hierarchy of women and has the protection of the *nacimbusa* of her district that she is no longer a weed, a piece of rubbish or an unfired pot.

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Expressed Purposes of the Chisungu

Secondary motives. Apart from such primary considerations, the Bemba, no doubt, have a number of secondary motives. As in the case of other rituals of this type the chisungu is an occasion for entertainment and the meeting of friends and relatives. These are mainly women, but men also visit the chisungu village for the purpose. As we have seen, few of the rites are solemn and a number of them provide opportunities for amusing play-acting, games and solo dancing. Women, in fact, speak of some of the rites as 'just playing'. The festive aspect of the chisungu must have been more marked in the old days when the rites took longer, the supply of food and beer was probably more ample, and the young men of the community were not away at the mines.

A number of Bemba seem consciously to realize that the chisungu is an occasion for the display of social status—the status of the parents of the bride and bridegroom and of the *nacimbusa* herself. At the ceremony I attended the exchange of food was, in Bemba eyes, on a pitiably small scale and, as we saw, Nangoshye constantly complained that she was being insulted by the mean fare cooked for her. Ceremonies in the old days seem to have involved a series of presentations of covered dishes of food (*ukutebeta*), of the kind known as 'honouring the son-in-law' that mark his reception into his bride's village before the chisungu takes place. A written account I obtained of the chisungu in the old days included four such preparations of food besides the porridge of festivity of which I have given an account.

This is a society in which the ceremonial expression of kinship obligations is important, especially in the long process of aggregating a young husband to his wife's village, so it is not unexpected that women should give importance to the chisungu as a centre of attraction for kinsmen. It is probable that much of the six months or so formerly given to the ceremony, was devoted to these ends. A successful and well-run ceremony attracts large crowds and contributes to the prestige of the *nacimbusa* and also to the village in which it is held. The dances provide an opportunity for expressing respect for status, so the *nacimbusa* employs the magic of attraction to make people come to her ceremony. Nangoshye explained that one of her objects in working so hard over the large models of snakes and other objects in the chisungu hut was to get the

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admiration of visitors. (See page 83.) Just as the Bemba headman tries to attract people to come and live in his village and anxiously watches to see whether he is successful in building up a community, so the *nacimbusa* estimates her power by the number of women of eminence who attended throughout or who appeared on visits from time to time.

Present-day differences of income have added to the prestige aspect of the ceremony. A man of substance wants his daughter's chisungu to be talked about. Like an English father who defends the cost of a 'white wedding' by saying 'I wanted to do my best for the girl', a Bemba father will say 'Well, I don't want people to say "That is not a man of wealth! There was little beer to dance the girl in his village." ' There seems even to have been some competition for the privilege of 'owning the chisungu'—between a father and a mother's brother, for instance. It will be remembered that besides the provision of food and beer, respect can also be expressed in Bemba society by songs and feasts.[1]

A really successful chisungu is difficult to carry out under modern conditions since the absence of men and the smaller household groups result in smaller accumulations of food. No large sums of money are exchanged at the chisungu ceremony, so that chiefs and men in authority stand to gain little by a performance. I think these are the reasons why the chisungu has disappeared rather quickly. It is, moreover, organized entirely by women, and male dominance is emphasized in a modern wage-earning society.

The survival of ceremonial is apt to depend on secondary motives of this sort in some parts of Africa, such as Sierra Leone and South Africa. In both contact with missionaries has taken place over a longer period, and the people are much more sophisticated. But, in the case of the Mende, for instance, the chiefs gain a large income from the holding of the *bundu* rite for girls; this is acknowledged to be one of the reasons why it has not only not died out, but it has even increased in influence.[2] The Kriges also point out that some initiation schools in the Northern Transvaal have

[1] A man might give his wife a second marriage ceremony in her old age (the *bwinga* marriage) for respect.

[2] Kenneth Little, 'The role of the secret society in cultural specialization', *American Anthropologist*, April 1949. The privilege of holding Yao initiation ceremonies is greatly valued. (See Appendix A.)

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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firmly convinced that the conduct of each partner to a marriage has a magical effect on the health of the other, and even on that of a third party who commits adultery with one or the other.

If a man dies, his spirit is thought to linger round the body of his widow, and to be a potential danger to anyone subsequently marrying her. The same is true of a widower on the death of his wife. It seems clear that the clan of the man or woman is involved, since, unless the wife is inherited, a substitute from the dead partner's clan is required to sleep with the surviving partner in order to fetch his or her spirit back to the clan.

One could interpret this requirement by saying that the spirit of a dead Bemba is thought to haunt the living if the departed man or woman has been defrauded of his or her rights. If this interpretation is correct, it can be assumed that a man who sleeps with the widow before the necessary ceremony of 'taking off the death' has taken place is regarded as defrauding the dead man of the marital rights he had acquired. The clan brother who sleeps with the widow to take off the death which lingers on or around her presumably acts as the social equivalent of the dead man and not on behalf of the clan as a whole; the matrilineal clan or lineage does not normally act as a corporate group with regard to the marriage of one of its male members, although the woman's lineage, in the person of her mother's brother, does assume such a position of control.

Should it be objected that the initial rights of husbands over wives in Bemba society are much less substantial than those of husbands in the patrilineal bride-wealth tribes, this must be admitted; yet in Bemba society, perhaps just because of the lack of durable property in which status can be expressed, there is a tremendous insistence upon points of precedence and honour, and fights over what seem to us to be trivial claims and dues. So the apparent contradiction between the strength of the mystic links between spouses and the weakness of the economic ties between them is not so surprising a paradox in terms of Bemba culture as it would be in our own. Moreover however uncertain a husband's rights as father may be, his sexual rights over his wife are never questioned. It is these which are at issue in the ceremony of 'taking off the death'. These interpretations, however, are guesswork;

614 it must be emphasized that the matriclans in this area are in no sense political or territorial groups. Through clan affiliation a man traces his descent, his rank, and, if he belongs to the royal clan, his right to succeed to chieftainship. In the old days substitution of men or women in the payment of blood revenge could take place within the clan. But no property is owned in common by the clan. There is neither joint occupation of land nor collective ritual activities. The distinguishing features of the Bemba clan are the name, praise-name and legends associated with the original ancestress and also, in some cases, with her brother.

554 614 616 Characteristic aspects of these Bemba clans are the hierarchy of status in which they are ranged and the reciprocity of paired clan relations. The former is based on the alleged priority of the arrival of clan ancestors in Bemba country and also proximity to the heart of the country. Highest in rank and forming the royal clan are the Crocodiles. This hierarchy is to be observed in other groups in the area, though the royal clans differ. Clan names, generally those of natural objects, animals, birds etc., have been called totemic, although there are few, if any, food taboos associated with them.(1) The words used are frequently archaic and are common to other groups in the area, e.g. Lamba, Kaonde, Lala. The story of their acquisition is the basis for the pairing of opposite clans. The clans paired seem to be those whose clan symbols are naturally antipathetic or complementary to one another, e.g., fish and crocodile, mushroom and rain. They are not paired systematically but often by purely arbitrary factors connecting the clan with several such partners.

616 764 582 602 Reciprocal functions of a paired clan are chiefly confined to funeral rites.(2) The *'banungwe'*, the name used reciprocally by members of paired clans, of a dead man's family both help and hinder at the burial ceremony. Ritually expressed, therefore, the traditional attitude between partners is one of hostility yet, as the complementary nature of the clan names often implies, one of service. Between partners there is ease and freedom of behaviour, privileges are taken and formerly, it is said, marriages between them were preferential. Briefly, reciprocal clan relationship among the Bemba implies ritual interdependence, partnership of rivals expressed in ritual, traditional joking and licence in daily relations and preferential marriage claims.(3)

613 [591] Within the Bemba clan a loosely organized group called "the house" (*inganda*) is recognised which is composed of the descendants of one woman. Richards points out that this matrilineage is in no sense a corporate group.(4) The members of the "house" trace descent to one woman and remember the village where this woman lived. They do not, however, live in one place since the rules of residence at marriage necessitate the scattering of both male and female members of the matrilineage throughout a number of villages. No property is owned in common by its members, nor is its senior male in a position of political authority, although he has certain powers over the women of the group and their children. This dispersed

(1) Richards, 6, 1939, p.62. Food taboos do exist among the Tabwa, see Vleugels J. 1948. (2) Richards, 5, 1937.
(3) This is marked among the Tabwa. See Vleugels, op.cit.
(4) Richards, 9, 1950.

5:Slaski E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

Luapula Peoples

A grey-brown, richly humic soil, permeable and retentive of moisture, alternates locally with loams and sandy loams. The underlying ironstone beds outcrop in the bushland towards the escarpment. Large ant-hills containing lime nodules are a characteristic feature in an area of otherwise non-calcareous soil.(1) Livingstone(2) mentions hot sources "at which maize and cassava can be boiled" south of Kalungwishi. They are more typical of the country farther north. Among the *chipya* vegetation (mixed deciduous woodland with tall grasses and bracken), now predominant, there still survive on moister sites patches of dense evergreen thicket (*mateshi*), remnants of the equatorial rain forest which must have prevailed in the earlier, more humid regime.

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

AGRICULTURE(3)

Cassava, the staple crop, is planted on rectangular or, more often, round mounds which remain in semi-permanent cultivation with periodic fallows. Rotted grass turf is used as manure. Groundnuts and, in Shila villages, ground-beans, an important subsidiary crop, are usually grown on newer land. Balls of groundnuts stored in the trees are a characteristic feature in the villages. Sweet potatoes, maize, beans, pumpkins, Kaffir corn, are also cultivated in the main gardens. Cowpeas, edible gourds, and castor oil are grown as catch crops. Finger millet is grown for beer. Occasionally accompanied by bulrush millet and cattle melons, it occupies the thicket (north of Mbereshi) and, more usually, the small *citemene* gardens, measuring up to one-third of an acre each, on the clearings in the foothill woodland. These gardens, encountered more frequently among the Chishinga-Lunda than among the Shila, are abandoned after a few years' exploitation. Small *matimba* gardens under early maturing varieties of maize (consumed green), rice, bananas and sugar cane are made on the moist and very fertile acacia *damboes* east of Lake Mweru. These are more characteristic of the Bwile country. Rice plots, particularly exposed to the depredations of birds, are protected by bark rope birdscarers, and shelters are erected for the watchers to keep off the hippo. Pineapples, mangoes and pawpaws are successfully grown in the area as is oil-palm, which is common on Kilwa island. Tobacco, Asiatic and white yams, Lima beans, chillies, sesame, and cotton, are among the minor crops grown in the village gardens alongside the huts. Curcas oil is planted for fences in some Chishinga-Lunda villages. Irrigated wheat is found on mission farms and an attempt has been made to introduce coffee as a cash crop.

LIVESTOCK

Prevalence of tsetse fly, as well as the lack of pastoral traditions, were responsible for the virtual absence of cattle. Lukwesa (1760-1805) kept a few head of black cattle as a matter of prestige.(4) They were neither milked nor killed for meat and could graze where they pleased on the cultivated land of his subjects.(5) Lately the keeping of cattle has been

(1) Livingstone, I, p.247.
(2) ibid., p.270.
(3) Based on C. G. Trapnell.
(4) Burton, op.cit., p.129.
(5) Gamitto, 1, p.390.

28 also have been employed. Household utensils and vessels were fashioned
32 from wood and gourds. Bracelets and other ornaments were manufactured from
copper-wire or copper bars purchased from the Nyamwezi who smelted copper
[411] in Katanga. The traditional arms were spear, assegai, *pocue* (the short,
broad-bladed, two-edged Lunda sword) and battle-axe.(1) A defensive wea-
pon was the square, lightwood shield said to be unpierceable after being
[726] soaked in water.(2). Bows and arrows were apparently not used in war.(3)

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

CLAN ORGANIZATION(4)

614 The clan (*mukowa*) consists of persons, alive and dead, believed to be descended matrilineally from a common ancestor or ancestress, even though they may not be able to trace their ancestry. The clans, now dispersed, have each a traditional home, *ntulo* (a word also used for the source of a river), a common totemic name (usually the generic name of an animal or plant), and a common slogan, *ilumbo* (from *ukulumba*, to boast). In prin-
[602] ciple clans are exogamous but in fact this is not observed; the exogamous unit is the *cikota*, a subdivision of the clan. Each clan stands in a joking relationship (*bwali*) to one, or sometimes more than one other, with which its name is connected by an association of ideas. Examples of such paired clans are: the leopard and the goat (because leopards kill goats), the iron and the elephants (elephants were hunted with iron-headed spears), the mushroom and the ant-hill (mushrooms thrive on ant-hills). No preferential marriage obtains between the *bali* (persons in joking relationship) as is the case among the Bemba. In the mortuary ceremonies a special role is assigned to a *mwali* of the deceased. An isolated instance of an inter-clan avoidance pattern is provided by the Lion (*Bena Nkalamo*) and the Snake clans. Members of a clan are supposed to give hospitality to their fellow-clansmen whatever their tribal affiliation.

[773] Clan organisation is believed to be universal and coeval with mankind.
No mythical explanation of the origin of clans is offered. Religious or
[784] ritual cults are not practised on a clan basis. There is no prohibition against killing or eating the object from which the clan derives its name, nor, on the other hand, is any special veneration required.

[554] The clans are not hierarchically organised though, in fact, some may enjoy greater prestige owing to their numerical strength or connections and others may be regarded as of little consequence, like the derided Pins and Needles clan. The clan to which the Kazembe's mother belongs is, for the duration of his reign, placed in a privileged position.

As a rule the clans have no specialised economic or ritual functions although the intervention of the Fish clan (*Bena Mpende*) is invoked when the water is too low for the salmon to reach their normal spawning grounds. No clan meetings are held.

(1) Valdez, op.cit., p.239.
(2) ibid.
(3) Burton, p.43.
(4) Based on information provided by I.G. Cunnison who is at present engaged on an intensive study of the Luapula peoples.

643 by Chakwangashya E3 as Nkolemfumu, Mubanga E9 as Mpepo (or else
644 Shimumbi D18 and Kafyama D20). This shows that Dr. Richards statement (*op. cit.* (1), page 103) that the present series of chieftainships is tending to become fixed in the main branch is somewhat misleading. The series can only be fixed if we cease to read the table horizontally and stop at a first or second branch. For example, if the third branch wins its claim to be considered, Kafyama D20 would take the Mpepo on the death of the present Chitimukulu Kanyanta D1 because D3, D6 and D10 would move up and the Mpepo is too small a post for Nkula D14 or Chikwanda D15 or Shimumbi D18. Moreover, in the line D, Chandamukulu Chabili D7 has only one living son Chakwangashya E3 and neither she nor her sister Kasonde D8 are likely to have more offspring. Mubanga D9 has one son and may have more. So it seems in the future that the series of chieftainships mentioned will not stay in the one branch of the clan. (Another possibility that would break the series of names is that if Chikwanda were to die then Nkolemfumu might claim that post because the salary is higher.)

At the moment, on the genealogical table, Mpepo D10 appears as fourth in the line of succession and Nkula D14 the fifth, but the death of any of the first four would bring Musungu Nkula D14 up to number four, whether he kept his present post or not. It is not the actual name that counts but the place in the genealogical table. The present Nkula D14 would not move from his existing post, I imagine, until at least three of the four men ahead of him had died and thus left vacant the Mwamba. He could watch junior men, for example, Kafyama D20 or Chabili's son, E3, taking the Mpepo and the Nkolemfumu and he could still claim his right to the Mwamba or the Chitimukulu before them. There is a very present chance that Chikwanda D15 could become Nkolemfumu if he wished, because both Chitimukulu D1 and Mwamba D3 will probably die soon. But if Chikwanda D15 does become Nkolemfumu, which I doubt since the salary at the moment is less, he could not go on and become Mwamba before his elder brother Nkula D14, unless the latter agreed.

● 554 At this point I should emphasise that both as regards prestige and
622 salary there is a distinct break after the three main chieftainships of Chiti-
643 mukulu, Mwamba and Nkula. At the moment, as I have repeated, a chief called Nkolemfumu happens to be third in succession. But the post is not important by salary or status (see later) and once the present series is broken by the deaths of the two leading chiefs this post of Nkolemfumu will be taken by a man much farther away than third in succession to the Paramountcy. Of the chiefs of royal blood the Chikwanda is now the most important modern post after the first three for he gets the next biggest salary after Nkula on account of the size of his area and population. Hence my statements that Chikwanda D15 will no doubt wait and follow his brother Nkula D14, rather than take a post such as the Nkolemfumu which would give him a lower salary but not jump him nearer to the Paramountcy. That position a man cannot lose whatever chieftainship he takes.

551 I enlarge on this particular chieftainship of Nkolemfumu in order to
622 show that the mere possession of its name does not bring the holder nearer
643 to the Paramountcy. There are other royal chieftainships paid higher or equal salaries, and since it is only the place in the genealogical table that counts, a holder of one of these can hang on to it until a post such as Nkula or Mwamba becomes vacant. I must emphasise that genealogical seniority entitles a man in theory to claim any of the three leading chieftainships,

not because he happens to be one of a series of names. That is strictly speaking, but as I describe elsewhere the dichotomy of the branches and political considerations have kept the Nkula in one branch for two generations now. 551 622 643

This brings me to another interesting point connected with the break in the series of names. There was a chance that the series might have been Chitimukulu, Mwamba, Nkula in a direct unbroken line. Nkolemfumu Mbonkali D5 stated his intention of claiming the Nkula on the death of Bwalya Nkula IV D12. He contended, and quite rightly, that he was senior to Musungu Chikwanda D14 and could claim it. If he had succeeded we should have had the new series mentioned. A glance at line C2 and C3 shows that an Nkula had been immediately after a Mwamba in the table in the past too.

The fact that Mbonkali D5 did not get the Nkula was due to the same reason that Chikwanda III C6 was not followed by D1, 2, 3 or 4. That there was the desire to give the branch of Mukukamfumu one or more of the higher posts. That was the reason openly given in 1934 when Bwalya Nkula IV D12 died. Such a reason emphasises the dichotomy of families, and Dr. Richards' statement that certain chieftainships are being stabilised in certain branches of the family may be true in a limited way such as this. But it is a dangerous argument for the present junior branches to press because if carried to logical conclusions it would freeze such chieftainships as the Nkula and Shimumbi in their own lines and tend to imply that they could not leave them to pass to the Mwamba. The tendency to split as regards the Nkula branch only started one generation back in line C in the present lineage, and some of the arguments given in the last subsection against the promotion of the third branch of the family could equally well apply for the restricting of the second branch to its own line. However that is a matter that is the future concern of the Superior Native Authority and Government. 622

Nkula D14 would take the post of Mwamba because the salary is bigger and perhaps because the status is higher too. Nkula V D14 makes a great show at the moment of not waiting for intervening deaths but of claiming the Paramountcy direct after Chitimukulu Kanyanta D1. But, as a glance at the genealogical table proves, all he has the right to do is to follow after the present Mpepo D10 to whatever post that chief attains. Nkula's mother C8 was junior to the mother C5 of Nkolemfumu D6 and Mpepo D10, so that Nkula D14 is junior to them in the right of succession. [554]

(*d*) Conclusion.

There are one or two interesting explanations necessary to complete this description of the line to the Paramountcy. 643

The status of the three or four leading chiefs seems puzzling at times. The Mwamba has often fought against the Chitimukulu. The Nkula has not, but perhaps only because the Nkula is a comparatively recent post and has not had the necessary time to build up power. There are several occasions on which Nkula might have fought had there been no European administration to restrain him. 622 643 669

Generally speaking, as Dr. Richards indicates, authority, power and prerogatives depend upon descent and kinship and all branches of the royal clan can claim connection with the original family of which a traditional Chitimukulu was head. 643 [614]

643 Chitimukulu was head. The Chitimukulu is the oldest name of a royal
[551] chief. It is the name carried by the most senior member of the crocodile totem and as such it demands the most respect. The sway of a Chitimukulu is as much moral and spiritual as temporal. His temporal power too is the greatest of the chiefs. He lives in and rules Lubemba, the stronghold of the tribe, and in the beginning all appointments of chiefs to help him hold the widening sphere of Bemba rule came from him. He also has the largest number of people in his own area.

622 The Mwamba only appears as a hereditary chief two generations before the present lineage and his area and population are still much smaller than the Paramount's, even after some Mwambas have increased their power by war against the Paramount. Thus by tradition and age the Mwamba is second to the Paramount though at various times he has made himself politically independent of the Paramount (5).

The Nkula is the most recent of the main appointments. I tell the history of it in Section 2 and the high status is no doubt partly due to the fact that the modern Nkula is a continuation of a chieftainship once held by a senior house. I believe also that geography has helped to make him so powerful as well as the fact that the house now is that of the second senior
[643 mother. The Chambeshi is said to be a religious boundary as well as a
788] geographical one. A Paramount has occasionally crossed it but only after performing a ceremony including the dropping of beads into the river. Thus Nkula has built up a geographical power to the east of the Chambeshi. The genealogical drift of the Mukukamfumu branch of the clan away from the Paramountcy has emphasised his independence. But the age of his title puts him below Mwamba in status although now his population is much larger.

[551] The name Nkolemfumu is older than Nkula but the reason Nkula is now higher in status is because there has been a gap in the continuity of the Nkolemfumu name and because the Nkula now has part of the area that was the care of Nkolemfumu. The old Nkolemfumu lived to the west of the Chambeshi, as now, but his sway stretched across into part of what is now Nkula's country. When Chitimukulu Chileshye Chepela A2 usurped the throne an Nkolemfumu had just died. Chileshye A2 had no one to send to inherit the place (Bwembia A2 was a fool) so he brought all the *babenye* relics and gave them to the care of Mwamba who also took over most of the area. When Chitapankwa B4 became Chitimukulu he usurped the Nkula for his family, giving his brother Sampa B4 as Nkula I the old Nkolemfumu area to the east of the Chambeshi. Later he re-created a smaller Nkolemfumu which he gave to Mubanga Chipoya C2, who thus became Nkolemfumu I of a new lineage.

551 There is thus no doubt about the traditional order of status of the
● 554 three leading names. Chitimukulu is first, Mwamba is second and Nkula
622 third. Beyond that I doubt if it is possible to say more than that status
643 perhaps follows genealogical closeness to the Paramountcy. The Mwamba probably will stick as second, even in genealogical closeness, from now on, but Nkula comes third in status by tradition as well as in modern importance however far away to the right he may be on a genealogical table.

622 The Nkolemfumu succession has gone fairly regularly since Mubanga Chipoya C2, the first of the name in the new lineage. When he died, Mutale Sichansa C3 and Chikwanda C6 were involved in the Nkula and Chikwanda

C2 had died and the incidents related previously concerning the Mwamba succession had occurred. Ponde C10 was defeated by Government forces and he obtained neither the Mwamba nor the Nkula. The opposition of the Chandamukulu family and the defeat and flight kept him from both these posts. Another story is that Ponde C10 was a favourite of Chitimukulu Chimfwembe B7 and that he enjoyed far more power and influence as unofficial aide-de-camp and regent to the Paramount than he would have as Nkula. 613 622

So the succession had to drop a line to the next generation. The post was the third most important in the tribe and it had not yet become stabilised in the one branch of the clan, for Nkula II C3 was from a senior *namfumu*, Mukukamfumu II B2 at the extreme left of the table. Why then did not Luatila D2 claim the Nkula ?

Only at this recent point in chiefly history, 1911, and with the fourth Nkula did the stabilisation of the Nkula in the one family begin. The only story of why Luatila D2 did not go to be Nkula is that both Chikwanda C6 and Ponde C10 sent word that they would not accept him. They said that the Chandamukulu branch held the Mwamba post and they wanted the Nkula for one of their branch. The Chandamukulu branch agreed and the stabilisation of the Nkula was begun.

Kafola D11 was dead so Bwalya D12 the senior nephew of Mukukamfumu C8, became Nkula IV about 1911. Chikwanda C6 only had a few months in his old post of Chikwanda when Chitimukulu Makumba B7 died and Chikwanda C6 inherited the Paramountcy. He was succeeded as Chikwanda II by Musungu D14 the younger brother of Bwalya Nkula D12. Chewe died about 1912 and Bwalya Nkula D12 obtained the relics without a war and then brought in his youngest brother Bwembya D15 as Chewe.

Bwalya Nkula IV D12 died in 1934 and, as I have mentioned, Nkolemfumu Mbonkali D5 did claim the post. It was the most recent attempt to keep all the big chieftainships in the one branch but it failed. The Paramount and councillors insisted that the Mukukamfumu branch must keep this one big chieftainship. So Chikwanda II D14 followed his brother and became Nkula V. He still holds the post. He was succeeded as Chikwanda III by Bwembya Chewe D15 and since the Chewe was proving but a small post the Superior Native Authority abolished the post and Nkula absorbed the area.

It is an interesting history giving an illustration of another senior branch of the clan the Ngoshye being swept into nonentity by the present senior house and it also shows the beginning of the present drift of the Mukukamfumu branch away from the main line. But at the same time, neither the late Nkula D12 nor the present one D14 acknowledge that they are too far away to become Paramounts.

Nkula's present position assessed by Government as regards salary, is as third in the Bemba heirarchy, following Chitimukulu and Mwamba. This follows closely his traditional status. Some people doubt whether Nkula would leave his post to become Mwamba if such an opening occurred. I am sure he would because Mwamba's salary is higher than Nkula's, and Nkula would be gaining in honour and status by becoming Mwamba. He would be justified in jumping over any Nkolemfumu or Mpepo who had been appointed from further to the right on the table or from the line below, as he himself would not have left his post to become Nkolemfumu or Mpepo. [554]

APPENDIX.

For ease of reference I give below the complete list of Bemba chieftainships as gazetted by Government at the moment, and also the salaries they draw from the Bemba Treasury. Those in brackets have been mentioned in this paper but have been deleted as chieftainships.

It is not possible to give a complete list in order of status, with the exception of the first three chiefs who definitely are, in order, Chitimukulu, Mwamba and Nkula.

In actual honour all *benang'andu* would follow before the sons. Makasa is the first of the sons. But in fact, apart from the first three royal chiefs, it is difficult to say whether any more chiefs can be ranked at all permanently by name according to status. A temporary list might be prepared for the *benang'andu* but any deaths might alter it. The sons might be arranged in order of seniority from the age of their fathers but that too would be altered by deaths, and moreover the sons, apart from Makasa, are not traditionally graded in honour at all. Their salaries should thus go with their population and work.

I put in this note as sometimes Chitimukulu is asked, for Treasury purposes, for a list of chiefs in order of status. It has differed every time, and, apart from the first three, it cannot really be given.

Kasama District.

	£
Chitimukulu	140
Mwamba	84
Nkolemfumu	24
Makasa	30
Chimbola	10
Munkonge	30
Kabwibwi	10
Menga	10
Misengo	8
Changala	10
Chilangwa	8
Chisangaponde ...	6
(Mfungo)	3

Chinsali District.

	£
Nkula	48
Mubanga	14
Mukwikile	8
Shimwalule	8
Nkweto	8
Mwaba	6
Musanya	6

Mpika District.

	£
Chikwanda ...	30
Mpepo	15
Luchembe	9
Masongo	8
Lukaka	8

Luwingu District.

	£
Shimumbi	18
Chipalo	18
Tungati	18
Muchereka	12
(Kasonka)	—

Mporokoso District.

	£
Mporokoso	42
Kaliminwa ...	24
(Sunkutu)	6

Kawambwa District.

	£
(Lwali)	—

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

language (*Cibemba*), which forms a distinct dialect in native eyes, although it does not differ very considerably from the neighbouring *Cibisa* or *Cilala*. (*c*) The tribal mark, a vertical cut on each temple about 1 in. long behind the eyes. (*d*) The common historical traditions of the people—even young men at the present day speak with pride of the coming of their fathers from Lubaland, and take delight in describing the military exploits of their ancestors and the ferocity of the old chiefs. (*e*) Their allegiance to a common paramount chief, the Citimukulu, whose overlordship of the Bemba territory is unquestioned.

(*b*) *Social Grouping*. (1) *Kinship*. The Bemba are a matrilineal tribe practising matrilocal marriage. Descent is reckoned through the mother and a man is legally identified with a group of relatives composed of his maternal grandmother and her brothers and sisters, his mother and her brothers and sisters, and his own brothers and sisters. His membership of this group determines his succession to different offices and his status in the community, although in a matrilocal society it only occasionally determines his residence. He also belongs to a wider descent group, the clan (*umukoa*, plur. *imikoa*) which is also traced in the woman's line. Each *umukoa* is distinguished by the name of an animal, plant, or natural phenomenon, such as rain. It has a legend of origin usually describing the split-off of the clan ancestors from the original lineage group, and an honorific title or form of greeting. Clans are in effect exogamous, since a man may not marry a woman he calls 'mother', 'sister', or 'daughter', and these terms are extended to the limits of clan membership on the maternal side. Through his clan affiliation, a man traces his descent, rank —if he belongs to the royal clan—rights to succeed to certain offices, such as hereditary councillorship (cf. pp. 100, 108), and claims to his relatives' help and hospitality.

Some clans have a higher status than others, according to whether their original ancestors arrived in the country as part of the following of the first Citimukulu, or alternatively, split off as a separate descent group later. Thus the crocodile clan (*Bena ŋandu*) is the *umukoa* of the first immigrant chief and stands highest in status (cf. 'Rank'), while various others, such as the fish clan, millet clan, &c., are said to be of similar antiquity. The hereditary councillors described later belong to these clans. All the *imikoa* are paired with opposite clans that perform reciprocal ritual

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

614 554 [616] duties for each other, but this form of social grouping does not seem to affect the political organization at all at the present day.[1]

613 Within the clan, smaller lineage groups are recognized. These have no distinct name; though the Bemba often refer to them as 'houses' (*amaianda*, sing. *iyanda*) of the same clan. Such a house consists of the direct descendants of one particular ancestress traced back to three or four generations—five at the most. Within this smaller descent group, succession to office is usually limited, and chieftainships tend to become hereditary within three or four generations in such lines.[2] Social replacement of one man for another, either as an heir, an officiant in a religious ceremony, in fulfilment of a marriage contract (in the case of a woman), or in compensation for blood guilt in the old days, tends and tended to take place within the 'house' and not the clan, though members of the *umukoa* do replace each other if there is no one more nearly related within the *iyanda* to do so.

It is the smaller descent-group which is important in considering the influence of the ancestral spirits (*imipashi*, sing. *umupashi*) over the living, either as affecting the welfare of their descendants in general or as entering the wombs of pregnant women of that descent-group to act as guardian spirits to the children as yet unborn.

602 571 Apart from the descent-group that determines his status, there is the body of kinsmen with whom a Bemba co-operates actively in daily life. These are the people with whom he may choose to live, and who gather together at any important event in his life, such as marriage, the birth of a child, illness, or a death. This group is known by a distinct term, the *ulupwa*. It has a bilateral basis, since it is composed of the near relatives on both sides of the family and also relatives in law. The balance between the powers of the maternal and paternal relatives is a very even one in Bemba society, in spite of the legal emphasis on the matrilineal side, and the ties uniting the members of the *ulupwa* are very strong.[3] Though it is

[1] cf. my 'Reciprocal Clan Relationships among the Bemba of North-Eastern Rhodesia', *Man*, December, 1937.

[2] The late Nkula, Bwalya Cangala, claimed, in the course of a succession dispute, that his near relatives, the children of his grandmother, Nakasafye, must now be considered as a separate 'house', as distinct from the children and grandchildren of her sister, Mukukamfumu II (cf. chart on p. 102).

[3] cf. my 'Mother-right in Central Africa' in *Essays presented to C. G. Seligman* (1934).

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the Zulu, Swazi and other tribes with the regiment system. The *icalo* is also a ritual unit. At each capital are the sacred relics (*babenye*) of the first holders of the chiefly title and their ancestral spirits are thought to act as tutelary deities of the district, and are worshipped at the *umusumba*, at village shrines, and old hut sites throughout the country, and are also commonly supposed to act as guardian spirits to children born within the *icalo*.[1] Naturally the ritual and political organization of the paramount's capital is more elaborate than that of his inferiors, but even the smallest sub-chief maintains his miniature court and tries to ape the state of those above him, while the bigger territorial chiefs sometimes rivalled the power of the Citimukulu in the old days.

The territorial chieftainships are arranged in order of precedence, according to their nearness to the centre of the country—Lubemba—and the antiquity of their office. To the most important of these chiefdoms—the Mwambaship, the Nkulaship, the Nkolemfumuship, and the Mpepoship, for instances—the Citimukulu appoints his nearest relatives, the one succeeding the other in order of seniority. Thus the present Citimukulu, Kanyanta, has acted in turn as the Nkolemfumu, and the Mwamba before succeeding to the paramountcy (cf. chart on p. 102). On the other hand, the sub-chieftainships have tended to become concentrated in local branches of the royal family, and the paramount's strong grip over the country and his intimate knowledge of affairs at the courts of his fellow chiefs is certainly weaker in these outlying districts than in the case of chiefdoms ruled by his close relatives.

To the commoner, membership of an *icalo* means his allegiance to the chief of that territory. He will describe himself as an inhabitant of a district, such as *Icinga*, i.e. *mwine Icinga* or, alternatively, as the subject of its chief, Nkula, i.e. *mwine Nkula*, and both terms are synonymous. He may move from village to village within the *icalo*, but he remains his chief's man. The latter, in his turn, reckons his assets, not in terms of the size of his territory or its natural resources, but rather by the number of his people and in particular the villages he has under his rule.

(3) *Rank*. Rank is a marked feature of Bemba society. It is based on kinship, real or fictitious, with the chief. All members of the royal crocodile clan (*Bena yandu*) are entitled to special respect, precedence on ritual and social occasions, and sometimes

[1] Hence the great preponderance of one or two birth-names in each district.

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to claims on the people's services. The potential heirs of a chief within his own branch of the family—that is to say, his brothers, maternal nephews, or maternal grandsons—are treated with particular deference. The former two categories are described as chiefs and addressed by the title *mfumu*, while the latter, only slightly lower in status, are referred to by a special name *beshikulu ba mfumu* ('grandchildren of the chiefs') and have their own ritual and social prerogatives.

Women of the royal line, the mothers, sisters, maternal nieces, and granddaughters of the chiefs are called *banamfumu* and are treated with much the same deference as are the men of the family. The mother of the paramount is highly honoured, succeeds to a fixed title—the *Candamukulu*—takes part in tribal councils, and has several villages of her own. The sisters of chiefs are privileged persons, protected and supported by their royal brothers, and usually granted one or more villages to rule. They are above the law in matters of sex morality, and a princess is allowed to have as many lovers as she pleases, provided she produces many children as potential heirs to the throne.

Not only members of the royal clan, but also persons who merely belong to the *ulupwa* of the chief, can claim high rank, i.e. his relatives on his paternal side, and his own sons. Some fathers of chiefs were nobodies and were quickly forgotten, but some have been famous men, honoured by their sons when the latter succeeded to the throne. The children of chiefs, though not members of his clan, and therefore not heirs, are also entitled to special privileges, and the *bana bamfumu* ('children of the chief') form a class of their own. They are brought up at the court, where they are treated in many ways more favourably than the heirs themselves and are able to claim headmanships and even chieftainships.[1] Even the half-brothers of chiefs, through other fathers (*bakaulu*), have rights to special treatment at court.

Added to this, already numerous class of royal personages are the descendants of close relatives of dead chiefs. Roughly speaking, any person who can claim to be maternal nephew, grandson, or son of a chief is succeeded by a man who continues to hold the same rank by the *ukupyanika* system described on p. 98. He is then addressed as 'chief' or 'son of chief'. The descendants of

[1] A few chieftainships are definitely handed on to 'sons of chiefs' instead of to 'chiefs', e.g. the Makassaship, the Lucembeship, or the Munkongeship.

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554 565 royal princesses are also entitled to honour, as well as those of wives of chiefs and even consorts of princesses. It will be seen, therefore, that the royal rank is a very large one. Any one who can possibly claim connexion of any sort with any chief, dead or living, does so, although the perquisites of rank are in most cases honour only and the possible favours of the chief, rather than any material assets. Every one outside the royal clan, or *ulupwa*, is an *umupabi*, or 'ordinary person', and in old days there was a slave class below—men and women captured in battle or enslaved to their own people for some crime. These individuals were known [578 567] as *bashya*. The term is now used as an opprobrious epithet especially for foreigners—often assumed to have been enslaved by the Bemba formerly. Slavery itself no longer exists.

561 (4) *Other Principles of Social Grouping*. Age is not a principle of social grouping among the Bemba. Precedence is reckoned on the basis of seniority, as in most Bantu societies, and there are special terms used to describe the different stages of life, suckling, infant, child, adolescent, unmarried, married, old, &c. But there [881] are no regiments based on age, as in South and parts of East Africa, and the boys initiation ceremonies so often found associated with such institutions do not exist among this group of the Central Bantu.

571 There are no occupational groups, with the exception of certain specialist fishing communities on the banks of the big rivers, and in the old days there were specialist hunters of big game. Secret societies, such as the *ubutwa*, which is common among neighbouring tribes over the Congo border, and has been adopted by the Bisa of the swamps, do not seem to have been introduced among the Bemba.

105 To conclude, Bemba society is as yet undifferentiated to any large extent. The tribe is an outgrowth of a lineage-group which has occupied its present territory for 200 to 300 years, and has remained more or less homogeneous. The original kinship structure is still apparent. All the social groups to which a man belongs are ultimately based on kinship—whether it is his household village or descent group, and there are no other forms of association such as age-sets to cut across this original grouping by descent. Rank consists of membership of the clan of the first immigrants to enter the land.

(*c*) *Economic Background*. The Bemba are an agricultural people

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(c) Economic Background. The Bemba are an agri-

cultural people

like most of the Central Bantu group to which they belong. They keep no cattle. Tsetse-fly at present prevents their keeping stock over most of the country, but in any case they seem to have no pastoral traditions, whatever they may have had formerly. Thus they have no means of storing wealth as have the Southern Bantu. Their marriage contracts are fulfilled by service and not by the passage of cattle. In the old days military glory and the extraction of tribute from conquered peoples seems to have been the dominant ambition of the Bemba chiefs, and their wealth consisted in the size of their following and the amount of service they were able to command. This fact profoundly influences their position at the present day (cf. p. 116).

The soil of most of this district is poor and it has not attracted white settlement. The staple crop is finger millet (*eleusine corecana*), while some kafir corn, a little maize, legumes, and pumpkins are also grown. The people practise shifting cultivation of a primitive type, and the plentiful supply of land and the lack of any localized natural resources which might attract the inhabitants to settle in one area rather than another all affect the political system. As has been shown, they decrease the strength of local ties as against political or kinship affiliations, and they account for the fact that the power to distribute land is not an important prerogative of leadership in distinction to conditions in most Southern Bantu tribes.

Hunting and fishing contribute a small share of the food-supply only. Organized marketing does not exist, and under modern conditions no cash crop has been found for this area. This fact, together with the absence of opportunities for local employment, forces the adult male population to look for work outside the tribal area, with resultant effects, as will be seen, on the political system of the tribe.

(*d*) *White Administration.* The type of white administration introduced in this area is described on pp. 112–20.

III. Bases of Authority

The positions of leadership in Bemba society consist of the following offices: (*a*) *territorial rulers* (chiefs and headmen); (*b*) *administrative officers and councillors*; (*c*) *priests, guardians of sacred shrines, and magic specialists with economic functions*; (*d*) *army leaders* in the old days. Succession to all these offices is

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642 based on descent in nearly every case. Chieftainships were limited
554 to one clan, as we have seen; some of the councillorships (i.e. the
565 *bakabilo*) are confined to a few of the older clans; and headmanships, though they may be won through the chiefs favour, tend to become hereditary in their turn. All priestly offices are hereditary without exception, as is natural where an ancestral cult of this type is practised. Magico-economic specialists, particularly those in charge of fishing villages, usually acquire their powers by descent also, as do some of the doctors and diviners (*yanga*). In each case the supernatural powers almost invariably correlated with political authority in this area are conferred by a rite, of great complexity, in the case of the succession of a chief, known as *ukupyanika*. For these reasons it is essential to study the dogma of descent by which these powers are believed to be transferred from one generation to another, and the legal rules of succession by which status and office are passed from one man to another.

611 (*a*) *The Dogma of Descent*. By dogma of descent I mean, first,
842 those theories of procreation[1] which express a people's beliefs as to the physical contribution of the father and mother to the formation of the child, and hence the traditional conception of the physical continuity between one generation and the next; and next their beliefs as to the influence of the dead members of each social group over the living, and hence the social identification[2] of a man with the line of his dead ancestors.

593 Among the Bemba it is believed that a child is made from the
611 blood of a woman which she is able to transmit to her male and
842 female children. A man can possess this blood in his veins, but cannot pass it on to his children, who belong to a different clan. Physiological paternity is recognized. Children are often described as being like their fathers, and are expected to give the latter affection and respect although they have no legal obligations to them under the matrilineal system. 'We take our fathers' presents because they begot us,' they say. But it is nevertheless the physical

[1] This term was first introduced by Malinowski, who showed how the rules of matrilineal descent among the Trobriand islanders are buttressed by beliefs that the father makes no physical contribution to the birth of his child. Similar material published by Rattray from the Ashanti area shews a belief in a double contribution of blood from the mother and spirit from the father correlated with a bilateral emphasis on descent.

[2] To use a term employed in a very stimulating manner by Radcliffe Browne.

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continuity of the mother's line of ancestors which is the basis of legal identification with her descent group.[1] A royal princess might even produce an heir by a slave father in the old days without lowering her child's prestige. The relationship between brother and sister, which is a very close one, legally and ritually, is based on the fact that the two were born from one womb, and in the case of the royal family it appears to be equally strong when the two are children of different fathers. These theories of procreation account, not only for the matrilineal descent of the Bemba, on which succession to chieftainship is based, but also for the rank accorded to the royal princesses as mothers of chiefs, and the headmanships and other positions of authority given them.

The Bemba dogma as to the influence of the dead over the living is also of the utmost importance as a basis for political authority. The spirit of a dead man (*umupashi*, plur. *imipashi*) is thought to survive as a guardian presence associated with the land or village site formerly inhabited, and as a spiritual protector of different individuals born in the same lineage group and called by the same name. The *imipashi* of dead chiefs become tutelary deities of the land they ruled over, and responsible for its fertility and the welfare of its inhabitants. They can be approached by the successor to the chieftainship at various sacred spots in the territory and at the sacred relic shrines (*babenye*) in his own village. A chief is said to be powerful because he 'has great *imipashi*!' It is for this reason he is described as the *umwine calo*, 'owner of the land', and it is important to note that in every case the most important *imipashi* and the most sacred relics are those of the first chiefs to enter the land, or the first occupants of a chieftainship.

This dogma as to the influence of the dead over the living inhabitants of a district, or the members of a descent group, is very similar to the general Bantu pattern. But the Bemba belief in the social identification between the dead man and his appointed successor seems to me to be particularly complete. It is the basis of the belief as to the supernatural influence exerted by the chief in his own person as distinct from his direct approach to the spirits

[1] The patrilineal tribes on the Nyassaland border consider the Bemba theory of procreation as entirely ridiculous. One Ngoni expressed his contempt, thus: 'If I have a bag and put money in it, the money belongs to me and not to the bag. But the Bemba say a man puts semen into a woman and yet the child belongs to her and not to him!'

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twelve uniformed messengers, *kapasus*, and for the rest they go short of service.

(*b*) *Military*. There was no general military organization in this tribe, but attached to each big court were one or two captains (*bashika*). Some of these were hereditary, with ritual functions connected with war magic, and others appointed at the chief's will. They now act as specially trusted messengers.

(*c*) *Judicial*. There is no fixed composition to a Bemba court, although its procedure is laid down by custom. At a small chief's court, the elderly men of the village attend, while the *bafilolo* act as advisers at the big *imisumba*. Cases go on appeal from sub-chief to chief, chief to paramount, and in the event of a case of extreme difficulty presenting itself, the Citimukulu can summon from their villages some of his hereditary priests or councillors, the *bakabilo* (cf. below). Witnesses are brought by each party to a case and are marshalled by the *bafilolo*. The senior man present claps as each point is made to mark the recognition of the court, and the chief himself finally sums up and gives judgement. The advisers speak when asked a point of precedent or law, and influence the chief's final decision by black looks or alternatively enthusiastic clappings of the hand.

(*d*) *Advisory*. There is no council or meeting of all the adult men of the tribe for special occasions, as among many Southern Bantu. Sub-chiefs have a panel of village elders and relatives to advise them, while the biggest territorial chiefs have hereditary officials who combine political and judicial with ritual functions. In the case of the paramount, these officials—the *bakabilo*—number between thirty-five and forty and form an advisory council on special matters of State. The *bakabilo* have been described as having descent as long as that of the chief himself in many cases and possess sacred relics in their own rights. The power of these relics is so strong that the Citimukulu is not permitted to pass through their villages for fear that one chieftainship should harm the other. *Bakabilo* are immune from tribute, wore special feather head-dresses in the old days, and even now claim special respect equal to that given to a chief when travelling about the country. They call themselves *Fwe Babemba* ('We, the Babemba'), may not leave the central territory (Lubemba) for long, must be buried within the royal district, and keep sex taboos similar to those of the chiefs. They succeed by a special accession

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ceremony and are buried according to particular rites. They are divided into groups according to the order of their ancestors arrival in the country, and each has a special office based on the privileges of his original ancestor, e.g. the care of the royal drum, the right to sit on a stool in the chief's presence, or the duty to call him in the morning by clapping outside his door.

The main duties of the *bakabilo* in native eyes are ritual, as has been described. They are in charge of the ceremonies at the sacred relic shrines and take possession of the *babenye* when the chief dies. They alone can purify the chief from the defilement of sex intercourse so that he is able to enter his relic shrine and perform the necessary rites there. They are in complete charge of the accession ceremonies of the paramount and the bigger territorial chiefs, and some of their number are described as *bafingo*, or hereditary buriers of the chief. Besides this, each individual *mukabilo* has his own small ritual duty or privilege, such as lighting the sacred fire, or forging the blade of the hoe that is to dig the foundations of the new capital.

Besides their priestly duties, the *bakabilo* acted as regents at the death or absence of the chief, and any question of succession or other matter of tribal importance is placed before the *bakabilo*, and the big ceremonies I witnessed at the chief's capital were all made occasions of such discussions. The procedure is complex, but an effective method of deliberation. The paramount sends two special hereditary messengers, also *bakabilo*, to place the matter before the council. The senior members speak and if a difficulty arises they refer the matter to the head priest of the land, the Cimba, who sits apart with his own following, and gives decisions on matters of tribal precedent or suggests rewording decisions to be carried to the chief. Some of the discussion is carried on in archaic *cibemba*.

The importance of the *bakabilo's* council is the check it holds over the paramount's power. These are hereditary officials and therefore cannot be removed at will. Two or three of the *bakabilo* have been chased out of the country in the past for overweening pride, according to tradition, and the Cimba was removed from office in 1934, but only after the tribe had suffered for many years from the results of a species of megalomania to which he seemed to be subject. Otherwise the *bakabilo* are immune from the chief's anger and exert a salutary influence over him by refusing